513, 575, 561

Gond AW32

/Information concerning the ghotul or gotul, the bachelors' and adolescents' dormitory, will be found in category 883, Adolescent Activities./

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 513 374 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He 513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to [352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire- [372] making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*

* [see cat. 116 p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *hala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *hala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*peda's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open [351] ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep ● 513 in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and 784 immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory 342 (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary, 513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies. The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write :—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cal.116, p.420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house ● 513 made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-lon'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 477 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 ● 513 The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' machan found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

[374]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

Sowing

From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory. Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyaq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241

The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically ' small *kosra* ', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatka* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala* ; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify ; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *haruna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August) ; the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as ' big *kosra* ', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus* ; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab* ; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the ' *Os kosra* ' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the ' small *kosra* ' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with ' *os kosra* ' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the ' big *kosra* ' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

241
834
● 513

The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949"
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 *Page* 86. Col. E. Clementi Smith, who commanded the detachment of troops which was sent to Bastar at the time of the 1910 rebellion, writes to me that in those days the Marias made arrow-heads of bone and porcupine quills as well as of iron. He adds, 'Another thing I remember was the dislike of a guide, when moving along jungle tracks, if one came to a cock's head stuck on a stick—the guide always said "one couldn't go there". The same objection also arose if one came to thin boughs bent over the track and intertwined. I need hardly say that we couldn't stop for these signs and one used to kick them out of the way—I think the guides expected the heavens to fall on us for such desecration. Another [436] thing I remember was that salt was more acceptable as payment than pice. We had a lot of our "enemy" enrolled as porters at one time. They hardly ever deserted. The sepoys liked them and I am always glad to know that we never caused any casualties among them.' For Col. Clementi Smith's account of the Bastar rebellion, see *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, pp. 240-53.

[513] *Page* 113, *line* 35. The real taboo is not so much on intercourse inside a house as on a bed. At Komhu I was told by the Hill Marias that 'no woman may sleep on a cot, for the village Pen is in it'. The Bison-horn Marias and even the Raj Gonds have the same rule. A wealthy Gond Zamindar is said to have made a platform of earth for his wife, as he would not allow her a bed.

Page 135, *line* 14. The Hill Marias do actually avoid their wives (how astonished the Baigas would be at the idea!) from the time when the *kosra* shoots appear until the threshing is over. They control themselves, they told me at Itulnar, 'by tying their cloth very tight'.

462 *Pages* 135-7. Though there is some division of labour between men and women, Bison-horn Maria women are much freer to share the work of men than are the women of many other tribes. They are allowed, for example, to plough—a thing strictly taboo to the Gonds of the Central Provinces. But they must not carry loads on a *kawar*-pole, for if they do Dongar Pen and the Rau will be offended and bring misfortune on them. They may reap a crop, but they must not tie it in bundles or lift it on to their heads with their own hands; a man must do it for them or there may be a scarcity the following year. Women may climb trees, but not near a house; they may fish, but not hunt. They may not winnow, but they can thresh with their feet (there is an illustration of this in *Maria Murder and Suicide*) and may beat out a *mandia* crop with long poles. Men, on the other hand, may not husk rice or clean it in a fan; they should not grind, nor should they carry pitchers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

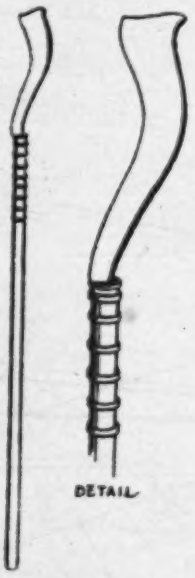

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchedar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *mausi*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Mausi-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis hiyāna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 302

then rubs down more gently, soothes and quietens the whole body. If oil-seed is used, she rubs this off gradually and cleans the back by ever more gentle movements of the hands. Sometimes, as at Chandabera, the girl catches a boy's shoulder with one hand and rubs and pushes his back very vigorously with the other. In eastern Kondagaon the girls often stand beside the boy and rub the back downwards.

Then the girl takes the boy's left arm and places it over her shoulder, squatting back on her heels and pulling him towards her. The comb is again brought into play, and the skin is soothed by gentle stroking with the hand, before she begins a very vigorous massage of the arm, gripping it with both hands and pulling downwards, then moving the hands in opposite directions with a twisting motion. When a girl is wearing a large number of rings this can be painful. It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule.

When the left arm is finished, the girl removes it from her shoulder, lays the hand in her lap and cracks the fingers one by one. Then she repeats the process for the right arm. In Koilibera the girl did not put the boy's arm on her shoulder but on the ground, and rubbed it up and down.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of 'Catch hold of her breasts!' or 'How big are her breasts?' In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy's arms and rubs his chest and stomach. In Phulpar and Koilibera I saw a girl crack a boy's fingers by putting her arms round his neck from behind to catch his hands.

A few other variations may be noted. It is not uncommon for two girls to massage a boy together. One does the back while another massages the arms. In Binjhli and a few other ghotul the girls do not put the arms over their shoulders but in their laps; here too they begin with the arms and afterwards do the back and chest.

In many places it is taboo for the motiari to massage the boys' legs, and where Hill Maria influence is strong even after marriage a wife does not massage her husband's legs unless he is ill. But in the central area, in Gorma, Berma, Jogi Alwar, and doubtless elsewhere, and in Chargaon and Korkoti to the north, the girls massage the boys' legs every now and then, at Jogi Alwar every three days, at Berma every fifteen. The girl sits in front of the boy and rubs right up the leg almost to the groin.

When a girl has finished her massage, she often lays her hand on the boy's head or shoulder and says Johar.

In the majority of ghotul this is the daily programme, but sometimes the combing and massage is done less frequently. In Binjhli, it was once a week—on Fridays; in Pupgaon, the girls cracked the boys' fingers every day, combed their hair every three days and massaged once a week.

X883 513

It is now fairly late and boys and girls prepare for bed. In fine weather they may scatter about the compound and in the various huts; when it is cold or wet they seem to prefer crowding into the main ghotul building. The little boys and girls lie down in a long row, two boys, then a girl, a boy, two girls and so on. Boys without partners—and there are often fewer girls than boys—lie down two and two on their little mats. Those who have permanent or temporary partners lie down with them, side by side facing each other in

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Belosa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 79. The *Aswal-gota* or tortoise box
Height 4"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
513

When visitors come to the village, the girls usually do not go to the ghotul at all. In Karikhodra the chelik complained bitterly about the disruption of ghotul life that was caused by the continual presence of subordinate officials and merchants. During the busy seasons of the year the ghotul is practically closed, specially at the time when everyone is needed to sleep in the fields to guard the ripening crops. When the boys are in the fields, the girls often camp on the verandah of someone's house where they play, dance and sleep. During a marriage, also, the ghotul is normally closed and in some villages there is a rule that the members must sleep in their camp and not in the dormitory so long as the ceremony continues.

In the very early morning, the Belosa gets up and goes round the ghotul rousing her girls. They ought to be out of the ghotul before dawn. 'They leave early', said a boy in Markabera, 'because they come laughing from the arms of the chelik and feel shy about it.' I am told that in Kondagaon the girls remain later, until it is light, but in Narayanpur they leave at cock-crow. 'A girl should be hard at work husking or grinding grain before her parents are up.' The boys get up later, but it is considered improper for them to be seen sleeping in the ghotul after the village is up and about. Soon after the girls have gone, they too are up and, taking their mats with them, return to their houses and the duties of the day.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

FIG. 96. The wooden ādā used for making a *masni*-mat
Length 2' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Amgaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 With these cases we may compare the tragic destiny of
583 Dome, a young unmarried Dhurwa girl aged about seventeen. A youth called Joga had been living as her Lamhada for the past five years, and their marriage had been arranged to take place at the next harvest. Dome did not care for Joga, but like any other Maria girl she was prepared to follow her parents' wishes in regard to her marriage and become his wife.

[513] One night the girl found herself alone in her house. Joga was not supposed to sleep indoors, but outside in the courtyard. The girl went to bed and shut the door of her room. Late that night Joga went to her and asked her to have sexual intercourse with him. She refused, saying that, if she did, the gods would be angry with her and her cattle would die, and Joga went away. Fearing that the boy might ravish her, she got her axe and kept it by her side. Presently she fell sleep and again Joga came into the house and caught hold of her. She started up and struck him a violent blow with her axe, making a deep wound from which he died in a few minutes.

The Court held that Dome had acted according to her right of self-defence when she was unprotected in the house at dead of night. It is not known why Dome rejected her [834] future husband, for it is not really a very common habit among girls for whom Lamhada are serving. It is possible that she was in her menstrual period, a thought that is suggested by her saying that the gods would be angry and the cattle die if she had intercourse. On the other hand, it may merely be that she disliked the boy and did not wish to have anything to do with him until she had to after marriage.

Another Lamhada, who is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment in Jagdalpur, is Khuja, a Muria boy from Esalnar. He is a cheerful and rather stupid youth who, when he described his crime to me, laughed heartily at what he considered the amusing bits. Khuja was living with his father-in-law and though the girl was very young had already been married to her. One day a Ghasia beggar woman came to the house and said to him, 'Come along boy'. He asked her what she wanted him for, and she replied, 'For your wife's head'. A fortnight later she came again and complain-